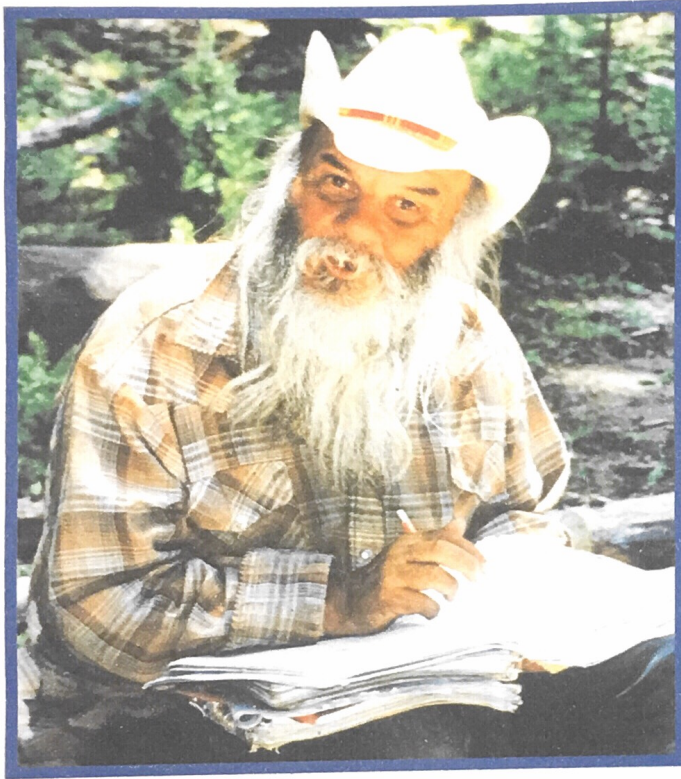


Rainbow Family Life Stories



*by Jodey Bateman.
Interviews with Rainbow
Family of Living Light
folks conducted between
1977 and 2008.
Scanned in 2018.
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contacted on Facebook.*

03.A

Excerpts from Basic Rainbow
by Garrick
written in August, 1984

6 pages

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Excerpts from Basic Rainbow by Garrick.

[This booklet was written in the summer of 1984 and as I write this in August, 1984, it has not yet been published.]

[At the Colorado Gathering] We developed the community kitchens, we devised numerous prototypes for waste disposal and sanitation. We engineered water systems and supply storage. All this was, after all, taking place in the cradle between towering mountains from which the ordinary hodge-podge of convenience was far, far away.

So it is in the doing of these things that one discovers the non-hierarchical method of working together. The exact methods that we humans will need to know, use and teach in the future...

From the beginning moments of this plan, we saw a silence—a space—at the center of the Gathering where we could all come together [on July 4] to express our thoughts, feelings, hopes, contemplations, meditations or prayers together in silence—a means acceptable to everyone—that we each can do as well and no one better than each other... a form that preserves each one's individual point of view and at the same time unites us in action and stillness.

The silence allows for those who pray to pray each in their own way and for those who meditate to meditate each in their own way, and for those who contemplate to do so, each one of us left to listen to the wind, feel the earth beneath us and watch the clouds and sky together with our brothers and sisters in the cathedral of nature...

We have the same problems as any other community: disease, theft, aggression, craziness. But we do get to apply our own techniques of healing, of teaching, of involvement and co-operation to solve these situations.

Our council is our public forum and decision-making body. Everyone who attends belongs to it. One person speaks at a time. Every body gets a chance to be heard. The council meets almost every day of the gathering as well as during set-up and clean-up. But its function is not merely decision making. It is a forum for ideas, a place for poets, a platform for political proposals and a megaphone for announcements. Some people just want to blow kisses, others have a particular message of importance.

The council can decide to stay focused on one issue and select a person to help keep that focus. Often a feather is passed from ... speaker to speaker.

Some agenda items are decided by consensus: that's why the resolve is clearly stated and in the silence that follows no one raises an objecting voice.

Other times it is not so easy. We do use show of hands to get an idea of how the group feels generally, but we avoid the voting process because it leads to endless campaigning and a tyranny of the majority rule.

Often the council will be of two minds about an issue; that's OK too. We have to learn to live with our differences. And often it's better if two solutions are approached rather than one idea followed and the other abandoned.

The council process is rich with alternatives. That's what we like about it. Sometimes we break into small groups to talk things out among different divisions before re-grouping into one large council. The council circle doesn't limit us to one repeated pattern for making decisions. In some cases, consensus may be the only acceptable route. In others, a straw poll may make the matter clear. In other cases we must all listen carefully and then individually decide what course of action to take. Often only the discussion happens at council and the decisioning happens in each

one's camps during later meetings.

The Council (formally the Rainbow Family Tribal Council) has entered into agreements with local, county and Federal agencies as well as private parties.

The supply depot - CALM [Medical center] - Kid Village - Networkers - and other parts of the gathering all have their own smaller councils that operate on the same basis and which are connected with and responsible to the main gathering council.

It is so sweet, so tasty, this process - even when it is bogged down, it is full of compassion and commitment. We have kept with this council for over a dozen years and found it to be an effective means of self-organization. [Garrick tells about Rainbow's role in anti-nuclear and Indian rights actions] We were a medical team at 1st and 2d Seabrook, we set up tipis on the tracks at Rocky Flats, we raised and donated food and the truck it came in to the 1973 Wounded Knee occupation, we have used our skills as gatherers and already practiced teamworkers at innumerable No Nukes demonstrations, providing co-ordinated child care, kitchens and parking crews.

From the gathering groups have proceeded toward political parties' conventions. We have fundraised for refugee camps in Central America and sent a relief caravan to Guatemala after the 1973 earthquake.

Within the gathering there have been workshops, camps and petitions dealing with the draft, environmental campaigns, farm labor organizing, no nukes education, American Indian rights, third world communication, prisoners' and mental patient rights.

But mostly we have held the ground on the question of people's use of public lands: the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to express our religious beliefs. It is on this issue that we have focused our attention. A Freedom is of little value if it is written on paper only. When we exercise our natural rights then we gain the benefit.

that those freedoms contain.

In gathering freely on public lands... we help keep the door to public lands open for other groups and individuals. How nice it would be if... people in many of the countries where there isn't the emphasis on individual freedoms we have here... how nice it would be for these gatherings to spread irrevocably and open up these doors everywhere.

While it is true that many attend the gathering for "the party," we do distinguish between "the party" and "the process." Because "the party" is like the icing where the real cake of the matter is "the process" of human co-operation that keeps the whole thing together. And the process of coming from the party into responsible participation in the event is something the gathering does to almost everyone who attends. This learning that we can hold responsibility collectively without authoritarianism, with benefit and success is one of the roots of the future growth of our species.

Shanti Sena means Peace Center and it is the name we give to the brotherhood and sisterhood which attends to the security of the camp.

Preparation for this includes training in non-violence techniques, persuasion, peer group pressure and the art of drawing an alienated person into the realm of human kindness. In the ideal situation when an incident arises, it is taken care of by the people who are right there present, but the Shanti Sena maintains camps and roving teams whose mission is to help out with whatever difficulties folks may find themselves in. Often these teams double up with the firewatch crews on regular tours of the camp.

... Shanti Sena holds meetings to orient people to the nature of these [non-violent] practices. Communication is the key. Although we are not beyond restraining someone who is violently

aggressive, peer group attention with understanding is enough to settle most disputes...

"Co-operations" is the area of the encampment set up for people or people who need help with something or "a little more co-operation." Often disputes between camps or neighborhoods are worked out here. "Co-op" also serves as a volunteer center for newcomers who want to plug into the processes and as a planning center for complex supply runs, pageants and networking...

The volunteer and participatory nature of a Rainbow Gathering cannot be overemphasized.

...The gatherings bring together so many different kinds of people - this is one of its riches: that different races, economic brackets, educationally and culturally diverse people get to meet each other up close and discover our common good.

...The extension of this event thru regional gatherings is an important outgrowth of this plan. In the year prior to this writing [Fall 83-Spring 84] there have been regional Rainbow Gatherings in New Mexico, Michigan, Colorado, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Hawaii, Arizona and Mexico as well as urban picnics and potlucks in New York, Boulder, Colorado, and Washington D.C.

Although these are much smaller, they keep folks in touch over the winter season, they bring new people in on a local level and they teach the art of community and logistics to a widening circle of brothers and sisters. We have heard of the desire to hold Rainbow-type gatherings in Europe, South America and the Orient...

What distinguishes these... [Rainbow] gatherings...?

1. The event is free and non-commercial. Not even one cent is charged to attend. Food, medical services, entertainment, workshops are all given thru donated time and energy.

2. The events are open to everyone without discrimination on account of race, age, religion, politics or sex.

3. The event is held on public lands. When this is done there is a relation of strength and love between the earth and the people on it. It upholds fundamental political realities concerning people and space and concerning governmental authority and inalienable human rights. When we gather on private lands we run the all-too-often-fulfilled risk of human possessiveness and we create separate classes: property holders and gatherers. This is not in anyone's best interest.

4. Somewhere in the event there is an opportunity for everyone to come together to put our minds and hearts toward peace as one people and as one family. This should be done in the most all-inclusive way so no one feels uninvited...